

REMARKS

Upon entry of the present amendment, claims 1, 4, 7, 16, 25, and 30 will have been amended, and claims 32, 33, 34, and 35 will have been added for consideration by the Examiner.

In the above-noted Official Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-31 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by DRISKELL *et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 6,072,493). The Examiner asserted that DRISKELL *et al.* disclose, *inter alia*, retrieving billing information from a billing repository, processing the billing information in accordance with a customer-defined format stored in a database, the customer-defined format comprising a hierarchy, sending the processed billing information to an output operation where a bill is generated in accordance with the hierarchy, and sending the bill to a customer. Notwithstanding the Examiner's assertions, Applicants have amended the claims to more distinctly recite their invention. In view of the amendments to the claims, Applicants respectfully traverse.

In claims 1, 4, 7, 16, 25, and 30 as amended, a server communicates with a billing data repository to receive (*i.e.*, extract) billing data and to format billing information in accordance with a customer defined hierarchy. DRISKELL *et al.* are limited to processing performed at a client location. Thus, this aspect of the present invention, as is now claimed, is clearly not shown nor contemplated by DRISKELL *et al.*

While DRISKELL *et al.* disclose the reading, translating, decompressing, and loading of billing information from a plurality of electronic bills into a billing information database to provide the customer with a single repository of information relating to the electronic bills (see *e.g.*, column 16, lines 34-41), DRISKELL *et al.* are conspicuously silent as to how or where the billing information is applied to the hierarchy, prior to its delivery to the customer. In fact, DRISKELL *et al.* offer no teaching as to any backend architecture in support of its system.

DRISKELL *et al.* indicate that billing information A 202 and billing information X 206 are both sent to the customer, loaded into the customer's computer system 100, and locally stored on the hard disk drive 113. Then, the customer may "activate" the first embodiment of the present (*i.e.*, DRISKELL *et al.*'s.) invention, which allows the customer to correlate the billing information 202 and 204, representing the use of services, with the appropriate elements of the customer's organization (column 9, lines 15-22). In addition, the billing analysis and management system is stored on the customer's computer (column 19, lines 65-67). Thus, DRISKELL *et al.* do not consider the processing of the billing information prior to its receipt by the customer.

Conversely, in the present case, a server in communication with a billing repository extracts billing data and formats billing information in accordance with a customer-defined hierarchal format. Thus, DRISKELL *et al.* are clearly deficient in view

of the amended claims.

Further, Applicants have submitted four new dependent claims (*i.e.*, claims 32-35) which recite features that are not taught by the reference cited by the Examiner and add no prohibited new matter. Claims 32 and 33 depend from claims 1 and 4, respectively, and claims 34 and 35 depend from claims 7 and 16, respectively. Specifically, claims 32 and 33 recite that the billing information is presented, or sent (claim 33), in accordance with a billing period defined by the customer. Claims 34 and 35 recite that a representative of the customer may check out a hierarchy, at which time the hierarchy is available to other representatives of the customer on a read only basis. These features are not taught by DRISKELL *et al.*

Applicants further assert that dependent claims 2-3, 5-6, 8-15, 17-24, 26-29, and 31-35 are allowable over the applied prior art, at least because each depends, directly or indirectly, from allowable independent claim 1, 4, 7, 16, 25, or 30, as well as for additional reasons relating to their own patentability. Accordingly, for each of these reasons, and certainly for all of these reasons, DRISKELL *et al.* are submitted to provide an inadequate and insufficient basis for the rejection of any of the claims in the present application. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that all of the claims in the present application are clearly patentable over the reference cited by the Examiner and an indication to such effect is respectfully requested, in due course.

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Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections of the claims, as well as an indication of the allowability of each of the claims including newly submitted claims 32-35, in view of the herein-contained remarks.

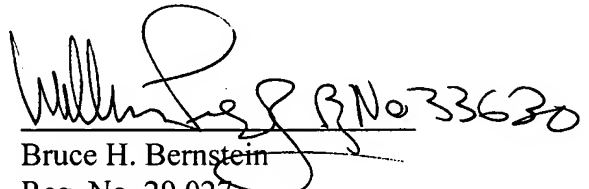
Additionally, Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for attaching the Notice of References Cited and PTO-1449 form, the form having been appropriately initialed by the Examiner to indicate consideration of the respective references.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Applicants believe that the present application is in condition for allowance, and respectfully request an indication to that effect. Applicants have discussed the features recited in Applicant's claims and have shown that these features are not taught or disclosed by the reference cited by the Examiner. Accordingly, reconsideration of the outstanding Official Action and allowance of the present application and all the recited claims therein are respectfully requested and now believed to be appropriate.

Should the Examiner have any questions, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,
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February 25, 2004
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